

could be grossly unjust, especially to some very able people who happened to have different ideas from his own; and in some cases this affected their careers quite seriously. I was fortunate in being one whom he approved of, but I watched uncomfortably, at times, as he put down others who had incurred his displeasure. Partly this was due to the fact that he was really a modest man, and did not realize the devastating effect he could have. Partly, also, it was an aspect of the determination which got results in his greatest achievements. But it led to serious errors of judgement and to results which some individuals could never forgive. Later, when I was safely established at the University of Otago, I got a taste of his methods in this way; for instance when, as convener of the Education Committee, I backed the establishment of a university library school; and I must say I found it bewildering. And yet, at other times he was kind, understanding, and magnanimous.

As an employer, Alley was considerate and supportive. Like Graham Bagnall, who was my immediate superior in the National Library Service, he left room for individuality, appreciated what one did, was always ready to advise but did not dictate, saw that one got credit for what one did well and took the responsibility if anything went wrong, and involved one in the development of policy. In my own work, I have tried to follow his example, and I can never underestimate the influence he had on another career which is now coming to an end.

There was a time when the New Zealand Library Association stood right at the centre of library develop-

ment in New Zealand, and when Geoffrey Alley stood right at the centre of the Association. As a family disperses and cannot be brought together again under the old terms, so the various elements of our own system now stand on their own, but the family feeling is still strong. We all need to remember now how much we owe to one who was, in a sense, the head of the family.

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3. G. T. Alley, *Taranaki's Rural Library Facilities*. A report submitted to the New Zealand Library Group...based on a survey of the Taranaki area and being (A) a summary of present library facilities (B) an estimate of the possibility of inaugurating a modern rural library service for that area (Christchurch, 1937).
4. W. J. McEldowney, *The New Zealand Library Association 1910-1960 and its part in New Zealand library development* (Wellington, NZLA, 1962): especially pp. 22-54.
5. See G. T. Alley, 'Some people remembered', *New Zealand Libraries*, v. 44 no. 1 (March 1983), pp. 4-6.
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Letter

Dictionary of New Zealand Biography

Sir:

The search is underway for notable, colourful, unusual and forgotten New Zealanders of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who can be considered as subjects for the second English-language and Maori volumes of the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. Research for the first volumes turned up a number of characters who had sunk into historical oblivion and ensured that a diverse mix of gender, social status and race will be featured in the first English-language volume.

The *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* is a 1990 project funded by the New Zealand Lottery Board and the Department of Internal Affairs. Present plans are for a total of four English-language and three Maori-language volumes spanning 1769 to the late 20th century, plus a pre-1769 volume dealing with Maori history. Full-time staff and the Dictionary's head office are based in Wellington, but information is fed in from a network of 21 regional working parties, involving some 500 volunteers, and a Maori network dealing with Maori biographies. In addition we welcome all the input we

can get from sources such as libraries. We are trying to cast our net as wide as possible and all information is valuable. Even if a suggested subject is not included in the Dictionary, the name and details are fed into our computer data-base, creating a valuable bank of knowledge for historians and social researchers.

The widely-cast net has brought convicts, hotel keepers, gold-miners, nurses and an Aborigine sealer into the first English-language volume of the Dictionary, along with pillars of society and politicians. It's a much wider cross-section of New Zealand society than that presented in G. H. Scholefield's earlier dictionary of biography produced in 1940.

For the new Dictionary, about 600 subjects have been selected for the first English-language volume which covers the years 1769 to 1870 and will be published in 1990. Essay-writing has begun and commissioned writers include a politician, heads of Government departments, academics and people interested in local history. Their essays, which will range from 500 to 4000 words, will interpret as well as inform, and some may be radical re-evaluations of a subject's place in history.

Maori subjects featured in the English-language volume will be brought together in the separate Maori-language volume which will appear the same year.

Although the first volume is well down the track, Dictionary staff would welcome more information on some of the subjects they would like to include. We are still looking for information about any Chinese active in New Zealand before 1870. We would like to know more about Benjamin Crisp of Nelson, a bullock driver and reformed alcoholic who formed the Band of Hope, and about Thomas Chasland, an aborigine and sealer who lived in Southland-Otago.

Other subjects that Dictionary staff would like information on include:

Thomas Adamson, a soldier, farmer and gold-miner, who marched with both the Wanganui Native Contingent and the Corps of Guides during the campaigns of 1869/70.

William Brassington, almost certainly Canterbury's most notable early stonemason and sculptor who did all the carvings in the Canterbury Provincial Government Buildings.

Georgina Burgess, of South Canterbury, a midwife,

hotel-keeper and postmistress who lived from 1840 to 1904.

Isaac Mason Hill, a prominent Quaker who lived in Nelson and established an elementary school there.

Sarah Louise Mathew, a governess who travelled around New Zealand in the 1840s and observed the founding of Auckland.

Minnie Parker, of the East Coast, who was involved in the Land Wars and saved the life of her brother during Te Kooti's attack on the settlers at Poverty Bay.

Anne Swift, a nurse who arrived from England on the *Lancashire Witch* in 1867, led a 'loose life' and was left destitute in Christchurch in 1869.

Johannes Zubritsky, who built up a well-known coastal shipping firm based on Nelson in the 1860s and 1870s.

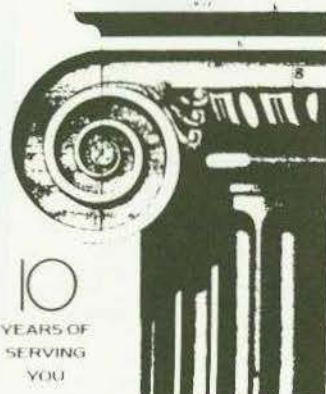
If you can supply additional material, suggest subjects for the second volume or are willing to display a kitset which informs the public about the Dictionary, please write to the Deputy Editor, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Internal Affairs, Private Bag, Wellington.

(Dr.) Claudia Orange
Deputy Editor

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